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Philippine-Turkiye air service deal to boost tourism -DOT Chief

The Department of Tourism (DOT) welcomes the recently concluded successful negotiations on air service entitlements between the Philippines and Turkiye, noting that the significant development in connectivity will boost tourism in the country.

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said such a development would further position the Philippines as an ideal destination for international travelers, especially during this summer season where an influx of tourists is expected to visit the country.

"Under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the Department of Tourism has identified the improvement of connectivity as one of its core objectives to strengthen the tourism industry. Thus, we recognize and commend the efforts of our counterparts from the transportation sector led by the Department of Transportation for helping us improve our air services partnerships that would give our would-be visitors the improved tourist experience that they deserve," Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco said.

To recall, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) announced that beginning International Airport Association (IATA) Summer Season 2023, passenger air service entitlements for the Philippines and Turkiye on the Manila-flights per week on each side has been improved to 14 flights per week, half or seven of the total Turkish entitlements to Manila will be on a co-terminal basis with Cebu.

The tourism chief noted that the decision to pick Cebu as co-terminal is also a plus in recognizing the services and sustainability efforts made in the award-winning Mactan-Cebu International Airport having been awarded as Asia's Best Airport in the under 5 Million Passenger Category of the prestigious Routes Asia this year.

This was a result of the consultations last March 28 to 29, 2023 in Istanbul between the Turkish, and Philippines air consultation panel composed of officials from DOTr, Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Secretary Frasco also emphasized the benefits provided by the Turkish airlines to the Philippines, which was also a longtime partner of the DOT in servicing European and Mediterranean source markets into the country for years.

To recall, the Philippines and Turkey first executed an air services agreement in 2010.

DOT

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DOT-DOTR chiefs inspect NAIA T2 ahead of Holy Week break

(continued from page 1)

The Department of Tourism (DOT) together with the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on Holy Tuesday (Apr. 4), conducted an inspection at the NAIA Terminal 2 ahead of the approaching long weekend holiday in line with the observance of Holy Week 2023.

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco and Transportation Secretary Jaime Bautista made rounds at the NAIA T2 domestic arrival and departure areas, with the objective of inspecting the enhancements so far introduced to the terminal, which is one of the identified pilot areas for the DOT-DOTr airport enhancement convergence program.

The airport enhancement program is being implemented as part of the DOT's main objectives, particularly, the Enhancement of the Overall Tourist Experience, which includes streamlining entry restrictions to the Philippines, liberalization of health and safety protocols, and discussions on visa reforms for the convenience of visitors.

Explaining the DOT's implementation of Filipino-themed enhancements to the interiors of NAIA Terminal 2 which it has undertaken with the support of its attached agency, the Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), Secretary Frasco said,Aesthetic improvements that are apparent to the NAIA Terminal 2 include the introduction of Filipino elements through the use of solihiya panels on walls, as well as furniture and lamps all made by local artisans.

"The effort is to give tourists and travelers alike a reminder of how beautiful our country is and how talented our Filipino workers are, as can clearly be seen in all the furniture that have been installed in this terminal," the tourism chief said.

"Kaya sana naman po sa pamamagitan ng mga improvements na ito, [na unang una,] mabigyan ng reminder ang ating mga kababayang Pilipino of how good it is to be a Filipino. To live in a country that is not only beautiful, but also populated by very talented Filipino artisans," she added.

Likewise, airport assistance desks at both arrival and departure areas of the NAIA T2 have been enhanced through the use of local materials. Plants, murals, charging stations, and mini-gardens have also been introduced at strategic areas in the terminal.

"This is the 'Filipinization' of our airports where we brand it and we stamp it the best of the best of the Philippines," the tourism chief added.

"We want to see the new decorations in Terminal 2. It is part of our joint project with the Department of Tourism. MIAA, DOTr, and DOT with these new designs which were designed and also funded by the Department of Tourism. So gusto namin makita," said Secretary Bautista of their joint inspection. In addition to physical improvements to the NAIA T2, Secretary Frasco noted that the DOT convergence with the DOTr aims to bring comfort to passengers, especially on busy travel periods including the long holiday that falls during the Holy Week.

To recall, Secretary Frasco announced that the Department anticipates the full recovery of domestic tourism this year. The Secretary noted that the influx of local tourists will be critical in attaining the industry's pre-pandemic numbers, which she said the DOT foresees to reach 100 percent this year.

According to DOTr Secretary Bautista, around 2 million passengers are expected to travel into and from the airports throughout the course of the long weekend.

Joining the two Secretaries are Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) General Manager Cesar Chiong, Philippine Airlines (PAL) President and COO Captain Stanley Ng, NAIA T2 Terminal Manager Sean Sunga, MIAA-Public Affairs Office (PAO) Manager Connie Bungag, and DOT Undersecretaries and officials.

DOT

DOT in US: Woos Hollywood to promote Philippine tourism

LOS ANGELES, USA — In a meeting set in the show business capital of the world, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco engaged in an animated discussion with film executives and creative industries stakeholders of Los Angeles in California to further promote film tourism for the Philippines.

The meeting held on 21 April 2023, was part of the Department of Tourism's (DOT) Listening Tours in a bid to collaborate and gather insights to spur the viability of film tourism development in the Philippines, as well as to highlight the country's islands and cultural treasures.

During the meeting attended by studio executives and television and film heads, Secretary Frasco shared the Marcos administration's push for the promotion of the country through films and support for the arts, with the President's drive to encourage international movie producers and filmmakers to consider the Philippines as their next film location.

The Philippines offers filming incentives through the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP). Under the FDCP is the Film Philippines Office, of which the DOT is a member.

During the meeting, Frasco noted that the Philippines offers ease of business and communications as English is widely read and spoken in the country, a wealth of talent in the production as well as pre- and post-production aspects, and certain incentives to film-related resources and services.

"Guided by our President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., we are determined to push for the country and for the Filipino story to be told, and also to pitch for the Philippines as a viable destination to tell stories from around the world," enthused the tourism chief.

The meeting was attended by a mix of Filipino and foreign nationals representing the creative industries including Mr. JP Mallo, Vice President for Marketing of HBO Max; Ms. Pearl Davenport, Director of Marketing Production Disney Branded Productions; Ms. Rosanna Canonigo, Head of TV Sales and Distribution for Relativity Media; Ms. Lucia Gervino, Head of Productions of A+E Studios; Ms. Mallorie Ortega, Vice President for Cinema Sala; Ms. Janelle So, founder of Janelle So Productions; Mr. Bernie Sarabia of Inspire Studios; Mr. Francis Dela Torre, Cinematographer / Producer for Electric Entertainment; Ms. Lea W. Dizon, Producer, Writer, and Media Consultant; Mr. Jeremiah Abraham of Tremendous Communications, Ms. Lisa Lew, Chief Executive Officer or P&L Media; Mr. Lyle Del Mundo, Founder and Executive Director of Filipinos Advancing Creative Education (FACE); and Mr. Byron Atienza, former Vice President for Global Creatives of Capitol Music. Among the attendees is former PBA reporter So, a Filipino-American host and producer. *"Aside from film, I think we have a robust production industry in the Philippines, the weather is one of our strengths for those looking for sunny all year round, and even when it's raining it's beautiful—I am happy to have been invited here and I'm looking forward to collaborate with you to promote the Philippines as a destination but also as a partner in media and entertainment,"* commented So.

Meanwhile, Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines Chief Operating Officer (COO) Maria Margarita M. Nograles also expressed the agency's full support to the film makers and producers as she announced the efforts of the agency to beef up their Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) Department.

"We have to fight to keep our stories alive. As Secretary Frasco mentioned, we have 7,641 islands in the Philippines. Each one has a community, and a unique story to tell. I leave that up to you to tell that story. We would love to take you into the Philippines, to take you around our communities, anytime you are ready we are ready," COO Nograles said.

Movies and series shot in the Philippines

International movies and series shot in the Philippines include Almost Paradise, the first American television series to be filmed entirely in the Philippines, specifically highlighting Cebu; Pekin Express, a French version of the Amazing Race, Million Dollar Island, a Dutch-reality show filmed in Palawan; and the Survivors Series which featured Caramoan Island and Busuanga.

Other notable projects include the Bourne Legacy with actor Jeremy Renner which featured the big lagoon of El Nido in Palawan, and the streets of Manila; Born on the 4th of July with Tom Cruise and Tom Berenger shot in the La Paz Sand Dunes in Laoag, Ilocos Norte and Vigan in Ilocos Sur. **DOT**

Record number 1,400 Koreans arrive to the Philippines

LAPU-LAPU CITY, Cebu — Seeing South Korea as an important tourism source market and driver for travel and tourism growth for the Philippines, the Department of Tourism (DOT) on (Apr. 13) hosted welcome rites for the record 1400 delegation of incentive travelers from Korea upon their arrival at the Mactan Cebu International Airport (MCIA).

Leading the initiative to greet Korean travelers with the distinct Filipino hospitality is no less than Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco who met a batch of 300 travelers from the delegation.

The travelers, who arrived at the MCIA via chartered flight KE 9615, are members of the Korean branch of UNICITY, a direct -selling company on health functional foods, cosmetics, and household items with over 60 markets globally.

As a reward to their top agents, sellers, and distributors, UNICITY-Korea sends a big volume of incentive groups to Southeast Asian countries annually. This year, the company is sending 1,400 people in four batches (Apr. 9, 13, 17, and 21) to Cebu.

For 2023, Secretary Frasco happily shared that Korea has reclaimed the number one spot in terms of tourist arrivals to the Philippines.

DOT data showed a significant pick up in Korean arrivals since last year, with 428,014 or a 16.13 percent share of the country's arrivals received between February 10–when the country eased its borders for leisure travelers—up until December 31, 2022.

"The good news is that as of today, we have over 1.5 million tourist arrivals to the Philippines, and our number one top source market are the Koreans. So we're very grateful to our friends from Korea for continuing to show their love for the Philippines as they have come back in droves, and the UNICITY group, in particular, has come with a delegation of no less than 1,400 individuals," Secretary Frasco said.

Frasco was joined by Lapu-Lapu City Lone Representative Congresswoman Cindi King-Chan; Lapu-lapu City Mayor Junard Ahong Chan; Mr. Rafael Aboitiz, Chief Executive Officer of GMR – Aboitiz; Mr. Julius G. Neri, MCIA General Manager; Mr. Heejin Noh, Corporate Business Team Leader of Tides Square Korea; and Mr. Sangyeol Ha, Korean Air Station Manager in Cebu, and officials of the DOT including Undersecretary Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, Undersecretary Ferdinand Jumapao, and OIC-Undersecretary Verna C. Buensuceso.

To complete their preview of the colorful Filipino experience, the travelers were also welcomed with leis, fascinating performances by Filipiniana-clad rondalla serenaders, as well as by vibrant Sinulog dancers.

Korea as an enduring travel partner of the Philippines

Prior to the pandemic, Korea ranked number one in terms of visitor arrivals to the Philippines, with 1,989,322 or 24.08 percent of the country's total number of arrivals for 2019. As with other tourism source markets of the Philippines, arrivals from Korea declined drastically during the pandemic, dropping to 338,877 and 6,456, for 2020 and 2021, respectively.

"They're coming on a daily basis and the numbers are increasing by the day. Last year, they were at number two, because it is the United States that [provided] our number one top source market. But this year, the Koreans have reclaimed the number one spot and we send out the message to all our friends in Korea, that you are more than welcome to keep coming back again and again to Cebu, Bohol, Palawan, and the rest of our beautiful islands in the Philippines," she added.

Philippines as an ideal destination for MICE

Secretary Frasco, who earlier identified the diversification of the country's tourism portfolio through multidimensional tourism as among the DOT's seven main objectives, further noted that the arrival of a delegation as big as the UNICITY group as a welcome development, especially with the DOT *"seeing MICE tourism become a very strong product for the Philippines and also for Cebu."*

"They are staying for a few days and we expect that this will contribute greatly to the economy of Cebu in particular, and to the rest of the country in general, considering the multiplier effect of tourism is really so that they will support our local tourism stakeholders, our small and medium enterprises, and the like," the DOT chief said.

To further boost the Korean tourism source market and visitor arrivals, the DOT, through its office in Korea, carries out marketing initiatives, including an online presentation to educate the MICE players in the Philippines about the Korean MICE market, as well as participation in upcoming key events such as business-to-business (B2B) fairs, and a MICE roadshow.

As the DOT chief expressed confidence that the incentive travelers will be able to fully appreciate the beauty of Lapu-Lapu City and the Province of Cebu, she also cited the potential of many other destinations – Bohol in particular, in attracting incentive travelers from Korea and other countries.

"We're certainly also pitching for Bohol as an attractive island tourism destination in Central Visayas, especially considering the variety of offerings that Bohol has especially in terms of nature-based tourism as well as pilgrimage and heritage tourism," she enthused.

DOT

Tourism chief Frasco dives in Puerto Galera, provides alternative livelihood to Oriental Mindoro

PUERTO GALERA, Oriental Mindoro—Not even the rain stopped Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco from joining divers in Puerto Galera town, Oriental Mindoro in a scuba diving activity on April 12 – in a show of support to the tropical paradise which remains 100 percent open for tourism.

Secretary Frasco was joined by Puerto Galera Mayor Rocky Ilagan, Undersecretary for Tourism Regulation, Coordination and Resource Generation (TRCRG) Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, and Region 4B Director Zeny Pallugna at the La Laguna Point, a popular dive spot in the local travel destination.

Secretary Frasco, who sits as the chairman of the Philippine Commission on Sports Scuba Diving (PCSSD), said that the DOT's presence in Puerto Galera shows the commitment of the current administration to help the industry recover not only in times of crisis but also during challenging situations.

"Puerto Galera continues to be unaffected by the oil spill and it continues to open itself to tourism worldwide. We are hopeful that through the efforts of the Provincial Government of Mindoro, our local government units, our mayors, our congressmen, as well as the help of the regional office of the Department of Tourism that tourism recovery and transformation under the Marcos Administration will continue. Notwithstanding the difficulties, the challenges, and the calamities this province has and is facing, the Philippines, including Puerto Galera and Mindoro continues to be a beautiful tourist destination," she said.

In an interview with the media, she said that the visit is also to encourage more tourists to continue visiting Puerto Galera as it remains unaffected by the oil spill caused by the sunken tanker MT Princess Empire off the coast of Oriental Mindoro last February 28.

"Napakaganda ng Puerto Galera! We are very hopeful that the message is sent across to everyone that they should come and visit Puerto Galera," enthused the tourism chief.

Apart from its white beach, Puerto Galera is famous for its scuba diving spots offering diving veterans and even enthusiasts a diverse view of the underneath, combining an impressive view of shipwrecks, corals, and other marine life.

Local tourism data showed that from April 3 to 10, 2023, a total of 18,757 tourists visited the tropical paradise, of which the top source of foreign markets are China, South Korea, the United States of America (USA), Japan, and Germany.

Mayor Ilagan, who also joined the DOT secretary and other officials in the diving activity, expressed gratitude to the Department for paying a special visit to the town, citing that Secretary Frasco was the first tourism chief to set foot in Puerto Galera since 2003.

"For us dito sa bayan ng Puerto Galera, we are grateful na dumating ang Tourism Secretary. Maraming salamat din sa ating Regional Director ng DOT, kay Usec. na nandito rin ngayon, di ko maipaliwanag kung gaano kami kasaya after so many years," he said.

While the town is still oil slick-free, there are at least 66 tourist attractions that have been affected by the oil spill from the sunken tanker, and over one thousand four hundred tourism workers were affected, thus the visit, according to the Secretary.

Tourism aid for workers, municipalities affected by the oil spill

Viewing the oil spill incident with grave concern, the Secretary also led the distribution of Certificate of Tourism Grants to leaders of Community-based Sustainable Tourism Organizations (CBSTO) from the various Local Government Units of Oriental Mindoro. The certificate entitles the organization to tourism training interventions with starter kits for alternative livelihoods while they cannot engage in their present occupation due to the oil spill.

She was joined by DOT Assistant Secretary for TRCRG Maria Rica C. Bueno, Congressmen Arnan Panaligan of the 1st district, and Alfonso Umali, Jr. of the 2nd district of Oriental Mindoro.

These organizations included: San Teodoro's KAMI; Calapan City's SMARTT, KAKAMBAL, and SNPS; Pinamalayan's SAMBA, SNR, and Wawa Womens; and Gloria's Samahan ng Mangingisda ng Agsalin and Sta. Theresa Fishermen Association.

"Kaya naman po nandito po tayo para magbigay ng Certificate of Training Grants sa ating mga frontline tourism workers to be able to offer alternative livelihood sa kanila that is not necessarily related to their present occupation but may offer work in the tourism industry nevertheless. And that includes agri-tourism as well as other skills related to tourism offerings, the point is that we continue to push for livelihood and employment under the Marcos Administration through tourism," she said.

According to Frasco, the DOT will provide training programs to the affected tourism workers in the municipalities including Gloria, Pinamalayan, Naujan, San Teodoro, Pola, Bulalacao, Mansalay, and Calapan City; topics range from Farm tourism: Urban Farming; Tourism Micro Retail: Beadwork and Lei making; Food Tourism; Kulinarya Training; Health and Wellness Tourism: Hilot Training, and Basic Haircutting Training.

To the delight of the tourism workers present, the tourism chief committed funding for qualified tourism-related projects through the Tourism Infrastructure and Economic Zone Authority (TIEZA) for each of the affected municipalities.

"Magbibigay po tayo ng 2 million pesos for each affected LGU for any tourism-related project that will fall under the guidelines of the financial assistance of TIEZA," said the tourism chief.

"And so, it's very important for us to be able to balance the need to manage the crisis and the need to ensure that livelihood and employment continues and that is why andito po tayo para po mabigyan naman po ng support yung ating local government units, yung ating mga tourism workers na hindi po sila nag-iisa at saka yung fear po siguro na other people may have in their minds because of the oil spill should be dissipated by the fact na patuloy po yung ating tourism offerings dito sa Puerto Galera on one hand and on the other hand, nandito po yung gobyerno para tumulong sa ating mga affected tourism workers in other parts of Mindoro," the tourism chief concluded.

Recipients of the DOT grants also expressed their utmost thanks to the tourism chief and the entire DOT.

Other local officials who personally met with the Secretary were mayors Henry Joel Teves of Naujan; Joselito Malabanan of Victoria; Nemnem Perez of Socorro; Jennifer Cruz of Pola; Ferdinand Maliwanag of Mansalay; Ernilo Villas of Bulalacao; as well as vice mayors Marlon Lopez of Puerto Galera; Marvin Rivera of Pola; Rodel Magsino of Pinamalayan; Romeo Edward Alvarez of Gloria; Richard Candelario of Bongabong; and Ramon Magbanua of Bulalacao. **DOT**

DOT Chief goes to Boracay to meet tourism stakeholders

Tourism stakeholders of Boracay Island raised suggestions and broached possible areas of collaboration as they met with Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco on April 28 at the Savoy Hotel, Boracay Newcoast in Malay, Aklan.

The dialogue in Boracay was done as part of Secretary Frasco's series of Listening Tours in order to fully grasp the challenges and realities faced by tourism stakeholders across the country.

Among the tourism stakeholders' request for a comprehensive training program on foreign language, prioritization of local tour guides, and the urgent need for a hyperbaric chamber.

The need for clean public restrooms was likewise emphasized by stakeholders during the meeting, noting that the island–a favorite among domestic and foreign visitors–lacked public toilets.

"This has become a problem for many visiting tourists, "said Ernest Bandiola Cruz Jr., President of the Boracay Photographer Association, Inc.

Responding on behalf of the DOT, Secretary Frasco vowed the prioritization of a hyperbaric chamber for Boracay Island, while other DOT officials present expounded on the training programs delivered by the Department, as well as the requirements for the DOT's flagship program, the Tourist Rest Areas, which will house clean restrooms, a pasalubong center for MSMEs, and an information center to provide tourists with convenience during their trip.

In 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic, Boracay recorded more than 2 million visitors. Last year, despite the challenges of the pandemic, including the displacement of 17,000 tourism workers, the island remained as the poster image of resiliency and sustainability of the Philippine tourism industry, as evidenced by the 1.75 million tourists who visited the island. Meanwhile, from January to April of 2023, the island has already recorded 687,139 tourist arrivals.

Dubbed as one of the World's Greatest Places in 2022 by the TIME Magazine, and among the World's Best Islands in 2022 by Conde Nast Travelers Readers' Choice Awards, Boracay is one of the Philippines' premiere destinations. **DOT**

Boracay releases new tag, Love Boracay

The Department of Tourism (DOT) joined beachgoers, vacationers, local government officials, and tourism stakeholders from the public and private sector as *'Love Boracay'* officially kicked off today at the country's premiere tourist destination, Boracay Island.

Amid the backdrop of the world renowned powdery white beach lined up with colorful parasails, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco expressed the unequivocal support of the DOT to the promotion and preservation of Boracay Island in Malay, Aklan.

"Today we celebrate Love Boracay. The love that you have for this island, for each other, for each and every single tourist that has come through this shores has sustained you amidst all of the difficulties and challenges that you have faced. Boracay you have inspired us all. Love has never failed you here in Boracay," Secretary Frasco said.

"Boracay has become the model for sustainble tourism development all over the world. We are the seeing concepts of sustainability being lived by the stakeholders here who out of their own volition now recognize the necessity of longevity of this destination for generations to come and the beauty of this effort is it does not only focus on one aspect alone but takes into consideration many aspects of sustainability including caring of the environment as well as balancing that with the commercial viability of the island. That is the push of the Department of Tourism: to be able to balance the protection of life with the protection of livelihood as well as pursue all of these efforts on the bedrock of sustainable tourism principles," added the tourism chief.

Love Boracay features a retro music night and a public forum advocating tourism that is responsible and sustainable.

To recall, the local government unit (LGU) of Malay replaced what was known before as LaBoracay, the non-stop partying held on the island every May 1st or during Labor Day, with Love Boracay.

Leading the festivities are Aklan Governor Jose Enrique M. Miraflores, Malay Mayor Floribar Bautista, Vice Mayor Nino Carlos Cawaling, and Aklan Provincial Administrator Selwyn Ibarreta. DOT officials present include Undersecretary Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, OIC-Undersecretary Verna C. Buensuceso, Assistant Secretary Rica C. Bueno, Director Judilyn Quiachon, Director Ronald Conopio, and DOT Region 6 Director Krisma Rodriguez. **DOT**

DOT Secretary graces Battle of Mactan commemoration

Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco represented the Department of Tourism (DOT) during the commemoration of the Battle of Mactan held last, 27 April 2023.

The event is observed annually every 27th of April, in honor of Lapu-Lapu and his men, who valiantly fought against the invading Spanish forces led by Ferdinand Magellan.

Lapu-Lapu, also known as Çilapulapu, was the former chief of Mactan and is revered as the first Filipino hero who resisted foreign influence.

Secretary Frasco and other officials, including Lapu-Lapu City Congresswoman Ma. Cynthia Chan, Office of the Presidential Assistant for the Visayas - Undersecretary Terrence Calatrava and Mrs. Happy Calatrava, Lapu-Lapu City Vice Mayor Celedonio Sitoy, Commander of Visayas Command - Viscom Commander Lieutenant Benedict Arevalo, Chairman of National Commission for Culture and the Arts Dr. Emmanuel Calairo, Consul General of Japan in Cebu - Consul General Hideki Yamaji, Consul General of the Republic of Korea - Consul General Song Sewon, and DOT Undersecretary Ferdinand Jumapao, Jr. witnessed the Reenactment of the Battle of Mactan and the Ako Ay Amnisador FMA Mass Demonstration, which featured some 1,000 eskrimadors aged 6 to 92 years old.

Secretary Frasco also shared that the DOT had showcased Cebu's pride—the Lapu-Lapu de Abanico—in two international exhibitions in Indonesia and Germany to present to the world the history of Lapu-Lapu and the Filipino martial arts, arnis.

The month-long commemoration features a variety of exciting activities, including a film showing, a food festival, cooking demonstrations, community-based culinary competitions, talent show, job fair, international bazaar, street party, carshow, grand fireworks display, Coco Sugba: Appreciation to Cebuano Music, Sadsad Sa Kadaugan, and a special martial arts performance by Team Raptors from Wonju South Korea. ***DOT***

DOT & DENR meet for oil spill recovery plan

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco participated on April 19 in an inter-agency committee meeting led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the Harmonization Activity for the Oriental Mindoro Oil Spill Recovery Plan.

The meeting, meant to synchronize efforts of the different government agencies involved in the consequential effects of the Mindoro oil spill, also aims to provide a more coherent approach on mitigating the negative impact of the incident.

In her opening message, Secretary Frasco expressed the full support of the DOT for the collaborative efforts towards rehabilitation, noting its grave economic impact on tourism stakeholders and the communities that are affected by the oil spill.

"There are now over 1,600 tourism workers in our accommodation establishments as well as our community-based tourism organizations that have been deprived of livelihood because of this incident; and therefore it is of great interest to us to seek guidance from the DENR as well as related agencies in order to forge a way forward. We hereby express our full support for the DENR and all other agencies under the Marcos administration," Secretary Frasco said.

Secretary Frasco likewise expressed optimism in the meeting's intention for a workable framework that could provide coherence to the government's effort to provide assistance, and the ultimate solution to incidents such as that of the oil spill.

"I'm very hopeful that subsequent to this framework that will be formed, we would be able to closely work with the provincial government of Oriental Mindoro as well as the local government units in that area and all other LGU's in the Philippines (for sustainable eco-tourism) so that we can have a cohesive approach towards the long-term success of Philippine tourism," the tourism chief said.

Beyond the framework is the aspiration that the meeting should be able to highlight the responsibility of decision-makers to balance the negative repercussions of drastic decisions that may bring more harm to people and the community.

"For us, to be absolutely certain about the data is very important on one hand, and on the other hand, to be cognizant of the impact on the tourism sector is also imperative, all the while ensuring that the tourists are safe and as well that the tourism stakeholders that depend on the position taken by government also have hope of not being a foregone conclusion as far as their lost livelihood," enthused Secretary Frasco. ***DOT***

Bisita, Be My Guest launched in Los Angeles, USA

The Department of Tourism (DOT) brings the Bisita, Be My Guest program to the Filipino community in Los Angeles, California, USA.

Attended by 150 Filipino community leaders and influencers, the DOT introduced the agency's flagship program in an intimate but lively program.

"I'm very honored to be here this evening among all of you who from the very start, by your work and by your example have made all of us in the Philippines very proud. In behalf of the Filipino people daghan kaayon salamat to our Filipino community here in LA for the love that you continue to pour into our country," said Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco.

"We have brought with us the DOT's program designed to give opportunities to fellow Filipinos to become ambassadors for the Philippines in partnership with the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), as well as the Tourism Promotions Board Philippines (TPB). We are here to tell the story of the Filipino people and to express the gratitude of the Filipinos to all of you who contributed so much to our country with no less than 3.16 billion US dollars in remittances to the Philippines," added the tourism chief.

During her keynote address, the tourism chief disclosed that as of April 22, 2023, the DOT has already recorded 1, 715, 757 foreign visitors, with 300, 000 coming from the USA.

"While we are only in April of this year, we have already reached the entire year's target for Philippine tourism from last year," added Secretary Frasco in reference to the 1.7 million target visitor arrivals of the DOT in 2022. ***DOT***

DOT goes to Bukidnon for Cultural Kaamulan Festival

Tourists and Bukidnons gathered in celebration of the Kaamulan Festival comeback, highlighted by street dancing competition at the Kaamulan Grounds in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon, on April 22 after a three-year halt caused by the pandemic.

Thousands flocked to the province to witness the 2023 edition of Kaamulan, which included activities such as the Piniliyapan Hu Bukidnon, the gathering of the seven hill groups, culture and arts exhibits, a garden show, and an agri-fair, among other activities.

Kaamulan, from the Binukid word *"amul"* which means *"to gather"*, is a rich cultural tradition in ode to the seven indigenous groups of Bukidnon, namely: Bukidnon, Higaonon, Talaandig, Manobo, Matigsalug, Tigwahanon, and Umayamnon.

In a video message, President Ferdinand *"Bongbong"* Marcos Jr. assured the people of Bukidnon of the cooperation of the current Administration with local government units to sustain the thriving industry and growing economy of the province. *"Let this event safeguard and preserve the cultural heritage as well as the indigenous peoples and products of your province for future generations to inherit. May these festivities lead your community to further development and to strengthen the camaraderie, respect, and love amongst your people,"* President Marcos said.

Representing Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, Undersecretary Myra Paz Valderrosa-Abubakar extended the invitation to everyone to visit Bukidnon and the whole of Northern Mindanao. *"President Bongbong Marcos and Secretary Frasco said that it's really time for Mindanao to shine. And I'd like to encourage people to really come and visit Mindanao and tell the whole world na 'it's safe to come to Mindanao and dapat pumunta din kayo,'"* Undersecretary Abubakar said during a media interview.

Vice President Sara Duterte-Carpio also offered her support to the returning festival while adding to the hefty cash prizes for the participants and winners.

Meanwhile, Senator Juan Miguel *"Migz"* Zubiri lauded the prospects of a new airport, museum, and other tourism-related projects in his home province. *"We will make Bukidnon the next tourism sight for the Philippines,"* Senator Zubiri enthused. Also notably present in the festivities were Bukidnon Governor Rogelio Neil Roque, Bukidnon Vice Governor Clive Quiño, Malaybalay City Mayor Warren Pabillaran, DOT Northern Mindanao Regional Director May Unchuan, and other local and provincial government officials of Bukidnon.

KAAMULAN 2023
"One Bukidnon: A Celebration of Unity in Cultural Diversity"
BUKIDNON HIGAONON MANOBO MATIGSALUG TALAANDIG TIGWAHANON UMAYAMNON

Contingents from Valencia City, the Municipality of Kalilangan, and Malaybalay City bested the float, ground presentation, and street dance competitions, respectively.

The month-long festival started on March 23 and ended on April 23. *DOT*

Calling all Foodies! Intramuros Administration unveils Food Market

Good news for foodies wanting to visit Intramuros: the Mercato Centrale at the Fort Santiago is now open! Officials of the Department of Tourism (DOT) and Intramuros Administration (IA) have jointly inaugurated the much-awaited food market at the Plaza Moriones, Fort Santiago in Intramuros on April 18. The lifestyle food market presents a diverse range of unique and delectable food, organic, pastry, and beverage products from merchants such as K.POP, Heaven Shake, Moyumie Snack Bar, BBQ Kinatan, Ilocos Empanada, Uncle Kims, Moyumie Shawarma, and Delsey Fruit Juice. With the objective to enrich the gastronomic experience of Intramuros visitors while simultaneously supporting local food businesses, the DOT and the IA soft launched the food market in March. Leading the ribbon-cutting ceremony are DOT Undersecretary and Alternate IA Chair Ferdinand Jumapao, IA Administrator Joan Padilla, RJ Ledesma and Atty. Vanessa Ledesma, founders of Mercato Centrale, as well as members of the IA Board of Administrators. Satisfy your cravings as you explore Intramuros, Asia's Leading Tourist Attraction according to the World Travel Awards (WTA). Visit the Mercato Centrale - Fort Santiago, Thursdays through Sundays, from 3:00 PM to 10:00 PM. ***DOT***

Celebrating tradition & unity in Bacolod: Tourism Secretary joins Panaad sa Negros Festival

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco lauded the reopening of this year's Panaad sa Negros Festival 2023 in Bacolod City, April 17.

Speaking before thousands of Negrenses from its 32 municipalities and cities, Frasco said celebrating cultural heritage is a necessity to honor the past and provide the youth with a view into the future.

"You are the promise fulfilled that as long as you continue despite all of the difficulties and challenges that you face, there is the promise of renewal, the promise of hope, the promise of prevailing through any circumstance that in and of itself also displays the pride of place of the Negrenses. Congratulations kaninyong tanan on staging Panaad all these 30 years and again now after the COVID-19 pandemic," Frasco said in her speech.

The Panaad sa Negros Festival is an annual festival which first started in April 1993 as a thanksgiving to Divine Providence and commemoration of a *"vow"* in exchange for a good life.

It is dubbed as the *"mother"* of all its festivals as 32 towns of Negros Occidental are gathering to showcase their cultural heritage, commerce, and industry.

The tourism chief also extended her warmest congratulations to the local officials for successfully staging the event after years restrictions amid the pandemic.

"I congratulate our governor, our vice governor, our province officials, and our mayors because in insisting that you hold the Panaad Festival you have also given life to all the Filipino people that depend on the success of this festival," the tourism chief said.

She also made special mention of the tourism workers—from artists to frontline workers—for their contribution to the industry.

"Our choreographers, our make-up artists, our costume makers, our bus and tricycle drivers, our vendors, our souvenir and pasalubong makers, our local business, our small and medium enterprises. This is not only a celebration of your festival, this is a celebration of the life and times of the people of Negros. Daghang kaayong Salamat kaninyong tanan," she added.

The pandemic halted the annual affair usually held at the Panaad Stadium and Swimming Complex in Mansilingan, Bacolod City and this year marks its return to its permanent venue which can house 25,000 spectators for the cultural presentations, LGU competitions, concerts, and the festival highlight—the search for the *"Lin-ay sang Negros"*—the lady who epitomizes the ideal Negrense woman.

The festivities will run from April 17 to 23, and is packed with activities, competitions, pageants, and concerts featuring popular bands such as Itchyworms, December Avenue, and Rivermaya.

The opening of the festival was also graced by Senators Francis Tolentino, Bong Go, the provincial government of Negros Occidental led by Governor Eugenio Lacson, and DOT Undersecretaries Shereen Pamintuan and Ferdinand Jumapao. ***DOT***

Tourism chief celebrates 53rd Founding Anniversary of Cebu CFI Community Cooperative

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco joined the Cebu CFI Community Cooperative in commemorating its 53rd Founding Anniversary on April 15.

As one of the event's guest speakers, Secretary Frasco shared with CFI members her fond memories with her grandmother Ret. Judge Esperanza Fiel Garcia, who founded the cooperative in 1970, and her grandfather, former Deputy Speaker and Cebu Governor Atty. Pablo 'Pabling' Garcia, who introduced and led the passage of the Cooperative Code of the Philippines in 2008 and also former chairman of the Cebu CFI Community Cooperative.

Secretary Frasco attributed the great success of the Cebu CFI Community Cooperative to her grandparents, seeing firsthand how they toiled to what has now grown into a multi-billion cooperative that provides assistance for education, housing, personal, and medical needs to over 155,000 members.

Under the helm of present Cebu CFI Community Cooperative Chairman Atty. Winston F. Garcia, Secretary Frasco also expressed confidence that the cooperative will continue to expand and extend services to more people in different sectors,

with the Secretary sa ying that *"Fortunately for CFI, we now have a type of leadership that is not only excellent and brilliant, but also forward-thinking and innovative."*

Providing the cooperative members with an overview of the plans and programs of the DOT under the Marcos administration, Secretary Frasco also said that tourism and cooperativism go hand-in-hand.

"While tourism is deeply involved in the value chain of our economy being deeply entrenched in many sectors across the country, the CFI Cooperative occupies a similar role having extended assistance and help to many sectors in our country."

"The DOT and the CFI [Coop] have a common denominator–our shared goal and aspiration for economic development for the people. In this way, both the DOT and the CFI serve as a vehicle for people to attain economic advancement by creating an atmosphere conducive for financial growth," she added, expressing eagerness on having a discussion with the Cebu CFI Cooperative on *"how tourism and cooperativism can partner together to further enhance the lives of your members."*

Meanwhile, Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, House Deputy Speaker Duke Frasco, Cebu provincial and local government officials of Cebu, CFI officials including its Vice President Farla Carolyn Fiel Garcia, Board of Directors, as well as representatives from the Cooperative Bank of Cebu, partner banks, and the public sector attended the said event as well. ***DOT***

Tourism Secretary explores Suroy Suroy Sugbo unveiling Cebu's cultural treasures

On April 15, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco attended the first day of the Suroy Suroy Sugbo: Enchanting Camotes and personally welcomed the visitors to the charming island destination, which has gained popularity for its white-sand beaches, pristine waters, crystal clear lake with caves, and other attractions.

"Suroy Suroy Sugbo", which means to go around and visit Cebu, is a flagship tourism program of the Secretary Frasco's mother, Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia. Since its implementation in 2005, the program has successfully boosted Cebu's tourism industry by letting the guests experience the tourism offerings, festivals, food, products, and cultural presentations prepared by local government units (LGUs), tourism stakeholders, and residents at each of the tour stops.

Esteemed guests including Senator Robin Padilla, House Deputy Speaker Duke Frasco, board members, and provincial and local chief executives in Cebu joined Secretary Frasco and Governor Garcia in welcoming Suroy Suroy Sugbo guests on the program's first day.

"By our presence here with the leadership of the DOT Central Office and under the directive of our President, we manifest our continued support for local government units that champion tourism, for truly tourism is one of the greatest contributors to our economy and is, and can be a vehicle for our country's economic transformation," enthused the tourism chief.

Secretary Frasco has earlier announced that DOT will replicate the Suroy Suroy Sugbo throughout the country through a national tourism program.

"So successful has it been, that we in the Department of Tourism are benchmarking this in the form of a program that we are launching called the "Philippine Experience" which like the Suroy-Suroy Sugbo aims to give our tourists not just an opportunity to visit our key destinations but also our lesser-known destinations and emerging destinations."

The DOT first conducted its benchmarking activity on the Suroy Suroy Sugbo last January and brought Regional Directors around 15 municipalities and one city in Northern Cebu.

"While our country may have only opened up in February of last year, the momentum for tourism growth has begun under the Administration of President Bongbong Marcos Jr., who has prioritized tourism under his development agenda, recognizing how tourism can provide economic opportunities to our fellow Filipinos," said Secretary Frasco.

"Remember that every time you travel, every time you book a flight, a boat trip, you book a hotel; you support a Filipino family. You help our tourism workers, you provide help to our tourism stakeholders, you help in nation-building. I continue to encourage you to continue in Suroy-Suroy because after this Suroy-Suroy Sugbo, as we benchmark this all over the Philippines, soon we will have a Suroy-Suroy Pilipinas," she added. **DOT**

Featured Festival: Moriones Festival

The Moriones Lenten Tradition of Marinduque, the heart-shaped province of the Philippines, attracts hundreds of tourists and locals during the long holiday break.

This annual event celebrates the colorful and lively reenactment of the story of Longinus, a Roman soldier who became a Christian convert.

Marinduqueños of all genders and ages, garbed in decorated costumes and painted masks, posed for photo ops and took selfies with tourists during the parade and via Crucis performance.

ON THE GROUND NEWS
Regional News Updates

Clark-Caticlan travel exchange seen to boost inter-region travelers

By: DOT - Central Visayas

In anticipation of the increase in international flights in the coming days due to the summer season, the Department of Tourism (DOT) Regional Offices in Central Luzon and Western Visayas pursued a strengthened route partnership between the Clark International Airport and Godofredo P. Ramos Airport or Caticlan Airport through the Clark-Caticlan Inbound Travel Exchange.

The Tourism and Travel Exchange is a periodic exchange between DOT regional offices to promote and showcase the different regions' latest tourism products and to enable business connections across the public and private sectors.

The exchange between Clark and Caticlan, held from March 29 to April 1 in Boracay Island, hopes to bring a bigger slice of the international visitors that have a direct flight to the Clark International Airport, into the world-renowned destination in Western Visayas. At present, only South Korea has a direct flight to Caticlan, while Taiwan has a direct flight to Kalibo International Airport in Aklan.

One of the highlights of the tourism and travel exchanges is the business-to-business (B2B) exchange, where tourism stakeholders such as travel agencies are given the opportunity to present their offerings to other businesses from other regions.

At the recent B2B exchange hosted by Henann Crystal Sands Resort, a total of 26 participants in Boracay pitched their tourism products and services to the visiting participants from Central Luzon.

Open to DOT-accredited establishments and organizations, the Clark-Caticlan Exchange also included island hopping, biking, yoga exercises, site and facility inspections of top hotel accommodations, as well as product presentations by the local government of Malay, and a familiarization tour of the host region, Western Visayas.

DOT

Filipino Brand of Service Excellence training reach grassroots

By: DOT -NCR

The Department of Tourism National Capital Region continues to conquer the academe sector as the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence Training returns for simultaneous training at STI Colleges!

It was an eventful learning session as the graduating class of the Tourism and Hospitality Management from STI Colleges, Cubao, Sta. Mesa and Munoz campuses join the FBSE training program.

The DOT-NCR Regional Director Sharlene Zabala-Batin officially opened the learning events.

Dr. Freddie Quinito facilitated the discussion at STI College Cubao, Mr. Gil Regondola for STI College Munoz, and Mr. Charlie Garcia for STI College Sta. Mesa. The guest FBSE trainers successfully facilitated the discussion and workshop, and were able to successfully immerse the STI students to the values and lessons of the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence.

DOT

ON THE GROUND NEWS
Regional News Updates

DOT - DOLE - TESDA to hold training for oil spill stricken Mindoreños

By: DOT - 4A

The Department of Tourism (DOT) formalized the national and local government convergence livelihood training program to help fisherfolks and tourism workers affected by the Mindoro oil spill in a ceremony on April 24.

The DOT, in partnership with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro signed a joint Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to implement the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/ Displaced (TUPAD) workers program which aims to provide a socioeconomic safety net for the affected workers of the oil spill through a temporary public employment setup.

DOT Undersecretary for Administration and Finance Shereen Gail Yu-Pamintuan represented Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco who is currently on official visit in the US. Undersecretary Pamintuan expressed the DOT's appreciation to the DOLE, TESDA, and the government of Oriental Mindoro for the realization of the partnership and extending help and support to the people of Oriental Mindoro.

"It is for this reason, that we are very happy to be here today to be part of this remarkable partnership with DOLE, TESDA, and the province of Oriental Mindoro, to extend emergency financial and livelihood assistance and to help alleviate the adverse effects of the oil spill to all of the citizens of Mindoro," Pamintuan said.

In the latest report from DOT Region IVB, more than 1,600 tourism workers were affected by the oil spill caused by sunken tanker MT Princes Empire off the coast of Oriental Mindoro last February 28.

The TUPAD training aims to empower the residents of Oriental Mindoro to take up short training programs on construction, agriculture, and tourism related livelihood to provide alternative means of income for workers displaced by the oil spill. There are three batches of the 3-day workshops to be given out by DOT scheduled on April 24, 27, and May 6.

"Meron pong limang iba't ibang klaseng trainings na puede ninyong salihan, ito po ay urban farming bead-making, haircutting, kulinarya para sa food tourism, and para sa health and wellness, puede po kayo mag aral ng hilot at essential oils making. At kapag nakumpleto nyo po ang buong 3-day workshop na po na yun, ang DOT po ay bibigyan kayo ng starter kit para makapag simula na po kayo sa inyong negosyo," Pamintuan said.

Among those present in the MOA signing were DOLE Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma, TESDA Director General Danilo Cruz, Oriental Mindoro Governor Humerlito *"Bonz"* Dolor, and the municipal mayors and officials of the province. ***DOT***

DOT-OIMD MOU with WWF Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM | WORLD WIDE FUND
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
SIGNING EVENT
APRIL 17, 2023
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM MULTI-PURPOSE HALL
ASEC. MARIA RICA C. BUENO
USEC. SHAHLIMAR HOFER TAMANO
EXEC. DIR. KATHERINE CUSTODIO

The Department of Tourism (DOT), led by the Office of Industry Manpower Development (OIMD), held the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WWF-Philippines on April 17 to continue their commitment in providing in-depth training focused on promoting environmental protection and sustainable tourism.

The principal signatories present in the renewal of the MOU were Undersecretary for Tourism Regulation, Coordination, and Resource Generation (TRCRG) Shahlimar Hofer Tamano and Assistant Secretary for TRCRG Maria Rica C. Bueno as well as WWF Philippines Executive Director Katherine Custodio and Policy Manager Liezl Stuart del Rosario.

"Our Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco herself is a staunch advocate of sustainability and inclusivity and gives importance to ecotourism as one of the priority product portfolios for Philippine tourism. This is also the reason why in our tourism training capacity building, nature stewardship, and the protection of nature and the environment is being highlighted as one of the best strategies to involve our tourism stakeholders in ensuring sustainable tourism," Usec. Tamano said in his opening remarks, highlighting that in the past memorandum with the WWF, the training benefitted 1,008 tourism stakeholders.

"We, on behalf of Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, would like to welcome WWF Philippines for this partnership. We are really very very happy to lead this renewal of this signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with WWF," Asec. Bueno added, expressing her gratitude for the strong partnership between the two institutions which she said was present since the 90s, when the DOT was developing ecotourism initiatives in Donsol, Sorsogon.

To recall, the DOT signed an MOU with WWF PH and launched the Sustainable Diner Project in 2019 aiming at reducing food wastage and contributing to the improvement of the implementation of sustainable consumption and production in the food service sector by giving tourism enterprises capability building and seminars.

Custodio also thanked the DOT for the partnership and recognized the massive impact of tourism with its program in the communities of Sorsogon.

"Twenty years on, [the program] transformed the whole community to be stewards and advocates for nature. Our work there is almost done because it's the local community that takes care of their own environment and teaches other people to do the same. Besides economic upliftment of the whole community, tourism changes the relationship that people have with their environment," she said. ***DOT***

Awarding two of its outstanding employees with the Career and Self-Development Incentive

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco led the Department of Tourism (DOT) in awarding two of its outstanding employees with the Career and Self-Development Incentive on April 3.

Last November 2022, Secretary Frasco signed the Department Order 2022-146 or the Implementing Guidelines and Criteria for the Grant of Career and Self-Development Incentive under the DOT-Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE).

The DOT-PRAISE serves as the main rewards and recognition system of the Department which aims to promote uniformity and consistency in the implementation of the awards and incentives programs that are in accordance with the existing rules and regulations set by Civil Service Commision (CSC).

The recipients of the DOT's Career and Self-Development Incentive this year were Atty. Cariza May J. Zabala who is currently the Executive Assistant for Undersecretary Ferdinand "Cocoy" Jumapao, and Ms. Dinnah Mee B. Lunjas-Cruz of the Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP) Section Head of the Human Resource Division (HRD).

During the awarding ceremony, the Tourism Chief extended her congratulations to the awardees who were able to advance their careers in the Department, noting as well their service milestones.

"This [award] is to encourage our employees to always strive for excellence in everything that they do and to always strive to become better everyday," Secretary Frasco said.

"Gusto ko lang po iparating sa inyo Madam Secretary ang pasasalamat ng ating mga empleyado sa mga nagawa ninyo sa kanila. Unang-una po yung sa Day Care (and Child-Minding Center), vinovoice out ko lang yung mga sinabi nila, iyon pong mga effort ninyo para sa empleyado, natutuwa po kami," Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, Atty. Reynaldo L. Ching, affirmed the Secretary's efforts in prioritizing the welfare of DOT employees.

On top of the incentive, the awardees also received an additional amount of P10,000 each from the personal funds of Secretary and Deputy House Speaker Duke Frasco.

Meanwhile, the awardees expressed their utmost appreciation to the DOT for recognizing their hard work.

"It is an honor to be recognized by your hardwork. All the more, to be acknowledged and given time by the Secretary! I am incredibly thankful to the Department for helping us grow and for recognizing our efforts. It continues to motivate us to strive for excellence," Zabala said.

"The Secretary's presence and her being generous with her time, for me, is the most rewarding part as it made me feel valued as an employee of the department. I'm truly honored and inspired to be part of the DOT," Cruz said. ***DOT***

DOT inducts newly elected Board of Trustees of PATA

Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco swears in newly elected Board of Trustees of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Philippines Chapter at the Department of Tourism (DOT) in Makati City on 03 April.

Secretary Frasco lauds PATA for being the leading voice and authority on travel and tourism in the Asia Pacific region.

"We view PATA as a very critical partner of the DOT in all of our endeavors especially that we have identified connectivity as one of our major priorities," the Tourism Chief said, citing the association's role in driving high value and quality of travel and tourism to-from-and within the region through its active partnership with private and public sector membership.

Meanwhile, PATA Chairperson Maria Paz Alberto commended DOT's work, and expressed the association's continued support to the industry by harnessing more talented individuals who can become tourism workers in the future through the association's scholarship program.

"A lot of families have been affected by the pandemic, they cannot send their kids to school and more so now, with the shortage of manpower, we really want to make sure that we have enough people to sustain the industry," Alberto added, taking their cue from the DOT's human capital development initiatives in raising the bar of Filipino Brand of Service Excellence.

Newly elected board of trustees present include:
DR. MARIA PAZ ALBERTO - Chairperson
USEC. VERNA BUENSUCESO – Vice-Chairperson
MS. MARLENE INSIGNE - Treasurer
MR. ROBERTO ZOZOBRADO – Trustee, Academic Affairs
MS. ISABEL GARCIA-LEE – Trustee, Ways and Means
Anne Cailla Flores- Secretariat Officer
MS. AGNES MACAPIA – Trustee, Membership
MR. PHILIP OLIMPIADA – Trustee, Education
ATTY. APOLONIO ANOTA – Legal Counsel

Founded in 1951, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is a not-for profit association that advocates responsible development of travel and tourism to, from and within the Asia Pacific region by providing leadership and counsel on an individual and collective basis to its member organizations, comprising 88 government, state and city tourism bodies, nearly 22 international airlines, airports and cruise lines, 62 educational institutions, and hundreds of travel industry companies in Asia Pacific and beyond.

Also present during the meeting are DOT Undersecretaries Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, Ferdinand Jumapao, and OIC Usec. Verna Buensuceso, with Head Executive Assistant Atty. Glenn Albert Ocampo.

DOT

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TO OUR MAY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATORS

1 Yambao, Chriselle May Salvador
2 Garduque, Patrick John Taguiam
2 Laforga, Josephine Escueta
3 Jaraplasan, Cristabelle Jan Llamas
4 Singzon, Melanie Claire Pasion
4 Zolina, Eric Zubiaga
5 Ceros, Milagrina Langit
5 Lopez, Benjamin Jr. Laxina
7 Samson, Stalingrad Frianeza
7 Valdez, Sharlemagne Silva
9 Baay, Jellybee Madres
9 Sison, Rensan Katherine Bacugan
10 Dialogo, Vivian Rosales
10 Esmaya, Myrine Jade Camarista
11 Bueno, Maria Rica Calvo
11 Baculi, Allan Bedida
12 Mercado, Mariel Colobong
13 Francisco, John Paulo Samonte
15 Masangkay, Marissa Anonuevo
16 Zabala, Cariza May Jimenez
17 Ramos, May Mendoza
17 Gutierrez, Rutherlyn Tome
17 Velete, Kristoffer Leo Medianesta
17 Salazar, Bill Punongbayan
19 Estrada, Ariel Gabriel Lumahang
19 Parinas, Zennina Rechille C.
20 Alfonso, Anna Maria Segovia
21 Roa, Edgardo Jr. Kauffman
22 Eblamo, Rheta Mae Sagrado
23 Cueto, JC Jan Ojeda
24 Sagnit, Eleonor Gorospe
24 Olba, Jennifer Andres
26 Mendoza, Felipe Neri Cruz
28 Peña, Amiel Eldrich Cabigting
29 Concel, Jamille Francine Arricivita
30 Tiopes, Karina Rosa Santiago
30 Rosas, Reynaldo Mendoza
31 Gestopa, Consuelo Lapitan